

# ABROAD

## KAMPALA

### *Amin Resurrected?*

The quiet return of troops still loyal to the deposed tyrant Idi Amin to the capital of Uganda following the overthrow of his rival, Milton Obote, has prompted speculation that the colorful if sanguinary figure may attempt to muscle in on his country's latest revolution. The fall of Obote, engineered by current strongman General Basilio Okello, has opened the door to various tribal and regional factions, and Amin has been quick to take advantage of the ensuing confusion. From his official place of exile in Saudi Arabia, for example, he issued a public statement demanding the right of all exiles to return home and saying he was strong enough to dominate whatever leadership might emerge from the coup. Talks are now going on between three main groups of Ugandan civilian and military coalitions, and Amin may attempt to intervene before any new government crystallizes.

## DJAKARTA

### *Croakers*

One aspect of the worldwide gourmet revolution has been a dramatic increase in the consumption of frogs' legs, of which Indonesia is a major producer. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of the batrachians that inhabit the steamy tropical wetlands abundant in this equatorial climate, and there have been murmurs of dire environmental consequences. For example, farmers have been obliged to use more chemical pesticides than usual owing to the increase in the number of mosquitoes and other insects that prey upon crops. At the same time, international wildlife authorities are saying that frog-hunting on the present scale—Indonesia exports something like 3,500 tons of frogs' legs a year—could prove disastrous for tropical systems, breaking major aquatic food chains, and animal-rights activists in Europe say that the batrachians are slaughtered cruelly to boot. In some regions, growth of a deleterious plant infection has been blamed on the rise in the number of frog-hunters, generally rice-farmers who go out into the paddies with nets and scoops at sunset. On the consumer side, there are worries that the use of pesticides in India and Bangladesh (big frogs'-legs producers) as well as in Indonesia may poison the flesh. Some shipments of Indonesian frogs' legs have been rejected by American customs authorities as being infected with salmonella bacteria. Finally, according to some Islamic teaching, the frog is an unclean beast and may not be eaten, and as Indonesia has the biggest Moslem population in the world, the question is of importance. The status of this problem so far, according to the deliberations of a group of Moslem scholars convened to consider it, is that Moslems may raise frogs but not breed them.

## SAN MARINO

### *Jump*

The population of San Marino, the smallest and oldest republic in Europe, nestled in the mountains of northeastern Italy, has increased dramatically in size, from 21,622 to more than 23,000, by a simple ceremony of oath-taking. The oath of allegiance to the San Marino government was

taken by 1,400 persons who wished to become San Marino citizens. Their qualifications? They had already been living in the country for more than thirty years.

## PARIS

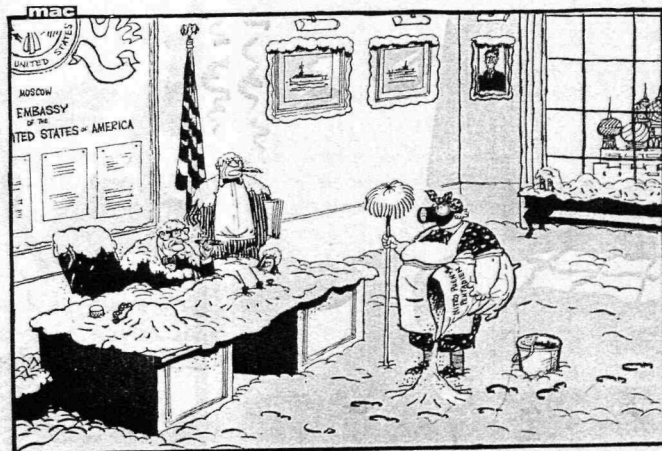
### *Second Funeral*

Victor Hugo is enjoying his "second funeral." The famous poet, playwright, and novelist died just one hundred years ago, and his reputation, enormous while he was alive, has not faded with the passage of time, although he has not been so popular with the country's intellectuals. It was André Gide who summed up their position when he was asked to name France's greatest poet; he replied, "Victor Hugo, alas." All that a modern consuming society can do to celebrate such an event is being done. Tens of thousands of T-shirts have been manufactured with Hugo's portrait; radio and television are full of readings of his poetry and recollections of his fame, including serialization of his most famous novel, *Les Misérables*, new productions of his plays, popular festivals, and so on. In Paris alone, there have been 13 special exhibitions devoted to his life and works this summer and fall. Hugo was a genius of popular communication, and at his original funeral, thousands of mourners filed by his coffin who could not have read a word he had written: They were illiterate. Hugo was a romantic revolutionary in politics and literature. His play *Hernani* caused a riot when it opened in Paris. He also enjoyed a reputation as a great lover, buoyed for posterity by many savory excerpts from his letters and diaries. The celebration's organizers have distributed hundreds of thousands of stickers that say, "*Hugo, c'est géant*"—roughly, "Hugo, you're the greatest."

## WINCHESTER

### *Alien Mink*

More than a thousand mink released here from a Hampshire mink ranch by animal-rights activists have been causing a scare among raisers of rabbits and poultry and keepers of pets. Although most of the mink have been recaptured there are still some on the loose. The mink, a small but savage fur-bearing carnivore, is not native to England and is believed capable of doing serious damage to small and medium-sized animals and even to children. Members of the Animal Liberation Front, which claimed responsibility, slashed open the mink cages and runs, and sprayed farm vehicles with paint during their raid on the ranch, police said.



"That's true, Mrs. Petrinski. I did ask you to dust my office. However . . ."

Copyright of National Review is the property of National Review Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.